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"MARY OF MAGDALA" EFFECTIVE ON THE STAGE.

Paul Heyse's Work Compared With Others on the Same Theme-Mrs. Fiske's Impersonation - Hackett in "The Crisis"-"Imprudence" at the Empire.

turned her head with that movement a flower has when stirred by a breeze. Her eves were sultry, darkened with stibium; on her cheek was the pink of the seashell, and her lips made one vermilion rhyme. The face was oval and rather small; and though it was beautiful as victory, the wonder of her eyes, which looked the haunts of hope fulfilled, the wonder of her mouth, which seemed to promise more than mortal mouth could give, were forgotten in her hair, which was not orange nor fi me, but a blending of

The man who watched this beautiful creature was "tall and sinewy with the comeliness of the East." "Dear God," he muttered "* * * it would be the birthday of my life."

All this was at a circus given by Herod Antipas, Tetrarch of Galilee. It was written by an artist, Mr. Edgar Saltus, who was born to wear the purple of French or Italian prose rather than the drab and cautious mantle of our soberer mother tongue. Now, the "Mary Magdalen" of Edgar Saltus is as superior to the Mary Modialen of Paul Heyse as is Heyse's play to, say, Hall Caine's futile melodrama. But the American author has not seen fit to make over his half-forgotten novel-it is out of print and twelve years old-into a play so we must be content with Mrs. Fiske's of ering at the Manhattan Theatre.

And a very enjoyable play it is despite the absence of exalted literary merit. Paul Heyse is not a genius. Few modern German men of letters are. Sudermann has unusual gifts both as novelist and dramatist; he learned the technique of the latter from the French and Ibsen-Ibsen, who was himself a close student of Augier and Dumas file But even Sudermann can hardly be called a man of commanding genius. It is his Dutch-like fidelity in the observation of manners, his new grouping of events and the sheer brilliancy with which he forces to a triumphant issue from his thesis that compel our admiration.

a rôle.

Heyse drama.

the revenge of Judas.

Brains plus a poetic temperament and that incommensurable something called genius we find in Hauptmann, not in Sudermann, or in the half-crazy Strindberg literary Anarchist and misogynist. Heyse belongs to the middle years of the past century, the turbid hour of Romanticism. of Schumann's symphonies, Kaulbach's gigantic, distorted frescos, the chilly pietistic canvases of Cornelius. Liszt's extravagant piano playing and the selfconsuming irony of Heine, the last of the Romantics, the first of the realists.

Heyse could not escape the color of his times. He was born a Romantic, lived one. will die one. His novel-ah! golden dream of youth when every man was a Philistine except the chosen Sons of Light-his novel, "The Children of the World," stirred the pulse of his generation. It is still read by spinsters with tender souls in modest Dresden pensions. To a much later period is the play "Mary of Magdala," but romanticism perches on its banners, the romantic mock-antique of Chateaubriand's "Martyrs," the romanticism, with a flavor of sentimentality superadded, that informs the sonorous and trumpeting phrases of "Salammbo." "They all come from Cha- fifth acts, though the modulation of characteaubriand," said the aged Jupiter of Weimar about the period when scarlet waistcoats. bombastic blank verse, flashing rapiers. mysterious dominos, soft sighs, strange oaths and dangerous enthusiasms broke praise, though churchmen may look askance Paris like a sublimated rash.

The two or three big poets and dramatists like Robert Hamerling, Leconte de Lisle or Woodruff has been lauded, and rightfully. Edgar Quinet could never catch the ear of the great public, though theirs is the original cave of historical, archæological, poetic and dramatic treasures which is rifled by men of lesser powers of invention. These three, to select signal examples, have dealt | The "Parsifal" music fits well into the scheme with classic themes in a masterly manner. They hung no stray scarves of color, flaunted no tawdry rhetorical banners upon the walls of their massive structures. They built solidly, enduringly Heyse has not. His "Mary of Magdala" is effective in stagecraft-and just here it must not be forgotten that an American stage manager with modern notions has been busy with the old-fashioned edifice-and his psychology is rather shallow. To call it a great play would be overshooting the mark of the superlative. It is an admirable acting play, especially in the American version. It affords many opportunities for picturesque embellishments, and these opportunities have been made much of in the Manhattan Theatre production.

Who was Mary of Magdala? Edgar Saltus tells us, but only a Philip Hale I glories. And it is also a phrase that rises could give us chapter and verse, and detail the list of histories, stories, ana, poems, and plays that have clustered about the weman with the centuries. Massenet wrote a species of secular oratorio on the theme, and the lady has been painted lying at full length in innumerable dusky forests with weaving white arms, blond hair, blue robes, in company with sinister skulls hourglasses and iron-bound melancholy books-perhaps the iron-bound melancholy volumes of the Magi written of by Edgar

And she is resurgent in religion as in art. Her name, like Sappho's, endures a by- can play a part that suits his unyielding leading rôles. word through the ages; hostelries of spine and carved profile to perfection. charity are named after her She seems to have stemmed from noble soil. She was a priggish friend in Winston Churchill's Syrian, red-haired as is the Fiske; her father, Theudas, a astrap; her mother, Eucharia, a descendant of kings. Thus the Saltus in the book, which is a species of fiction

Early Curistian gossip has it that Magdala was the name of her father's castle and that she derived her name because of a city located on the western coast of Lake Gen neserath. The Greek term Magdala signifies a castellated rock. Genneserath was known as the "Coast of Towers," pious, credulous scribes assert. But comes an agnostic named Smith, who declares in his and it exhibit several interesting situations. Dictionary of the Bible," that "the name of Magdala does not really exist in the Bible. It is found in the received Greek text, and in the authorized version of and dance on the lawn before the old Colonial Matthew xv. 39, only; but the chief manuscripts and versions exhibit the name as Magadan * * * By the Jews the word Megaddela is used to denote a person who platted hair, a practice much in use among women of loose character." Therefore a Magadelen connoted in those days exactly what it does now. We recall Sir Edwin Arnold's gorgeous description of Magdaline -as he calls her-and the lines devoted to

this "Queen of Sin." I lived in all this land, the boldest, worst ' Who braided her hair in the harlet's way.

Heyse leaves no doubt as to the character of his Magdala. She is scarlet, but within ter soul works the pale leaven of repentance To Nietzsche, who loathed the word "reentance " as something infinitely degrad-

MRS. FISKE AND HER NEW PLAY ing to mankind's freedom of will, this likely to be a long-lived attraction at the softening of the woman's heart would have Empire, unless Mr. Frohman wills otherbeen but further evidence of further degeneration. To repent is to deny life, he sometimes verging on farce, but enter would have affirmed. Certainly there is taining ever. The story is improbable something of the sublime in the unregenerate pride of Milton's lost angel. The female penitent suggests ever the plastic pose so dear to the artificer of the footlights. It is hard to believe in its ultimate sincerities. To the theatregoer the repenting sinner is favorite device. She becomes for the weeping women in the orchestra a symbol, a sort of spiritual scapegoat for their own more Faversham than ever-a desirable peccadillos. And refreshed in spirit, their meek little sins scabbarded over Sunday. they pour out into the streets, into chosen retreats where with the aid of tea they discuss their dearest foe and botanize on the grave of her shattered reputation. Verily, the Magdalen hath her uses! quite reformed this sinner-saint can be offensive, for her attitude is that of one who goes about carrying upon her pugnacious, shoulder the chip of chastity. As to the much-discussed assumption of

are the shadows of regret. Judas disap-

pointed her, Flavius disgusted her; the

time was ripe for her soul to seek the higher

life. It came in the guise of a god-man.

Edgar Saltus, with psychologic audacity

loving the Messiah. It is a lofty love,

vet the love of a woman who worshipped

while she adored. For this Judas betrays

his Master, and it is this motive that makes

the Saltus novel strong, and it is its ab-

But that way lies blasphemy; and blas-

There is no doubt that the occasional

nelasticity and lack of rhythm in Mrs.

Fiske's impersonation the first night will be

corrected. She burrows her way into

a character until by superior mimicry it

becomes flesh of her flesh. We all re-

illuding us with a Mary who, if not a volupt-

uous courtesan-which is not the idea of

Heyse-will be a woman whose face is an

incarnate desire. The playing of the role

in the modern key is not an unnardonable

offence. It is to be commended, not con-

demned. Perfervit elocution is deadly,

even in a play full of spouting, "purple"

lines. Mrs. Fiske knew this, knew that

the danger line was near and avoided it

She is best at the close of the fourth and

Mr. Tyrone Power deserves a volume of

trayer's character. His is a task easier to

overcome than Mrs. Fiske's. He is dynamic

she is all suppression, renunciation. Mr

No need now to dwell upon the splendors

of the mise-en-scene: upon the really artistic

lighting, of the naturalism of the stage

mobs: upon the general brilliancy of cos-

tumes and music. This last is a feature

of things. And it is curious to note that

Wagner is the latter-day progenitor of this

combination of scenic effects, music that

follows the curves of speech and action,

of themes that are half myth, half real.

Armand Sylvestre, Eugene Morand and

Robert Louis Stevenson in the seldom

to one's lips after witnessing with weary

eves, after hearing with stunned ears, the

kind of melodrama that masquerades as

tragedy, the cheap heroics of sin that stalk

about in the guise of virtue. Charles Lamb

spoke of books that are not books, and so

are there plays that are not plays, but

medleys of other men's ideas, scourings

from the pot dramatic, withal genuine

potboilers. Need we name them, executed

James Hackett is not a particularly

magnetic actor, nor a plastic one, but he

Stephen Brice is that part. He is our

wooden novel, "The Crisis"-possibly called

so because no human red blood circulates

tuned in the key of history. Its drama-

tization, while it leaves the chief currents

It is at Wallack's and is enjoying public

approval. It should. It is full of political

pills for pink people, is crammed with

pathos and humor of the so-called Southern

variety-though few Southerners will ac-

It suggests a dozen plays of the "Ala-bama," "Fair Rebel," "Shenandoah" type.

It is full of smiling, pouting girls, who firt

mansion while fireflies flit and jealousy,

laughter-breeding. Act III. is the most

exciting. Its hysterical, patriotic misses

strumming and screaming Dixie while

bullets punctuate the music is very fetch-

ing. Mr. Hackett has an excellent com-

pany, an excellent play, an excellent rôle

Charlotte Walker is a valuable aid as grace-

ul Virginia Carrel After all, it is the

handsome Hackett profile that dominates

the piece. Like the superb Delmar in

Sentimental Education." Mr. Hackett

could quell a riot by merely turning that

"Imprudence," by H. V. Esmond, is

classic profile of his to the mob!

love and political hatreds are abroad in the

land.

of the novel, is really an improvement

as they are, by incomparable daubers?

Gabriel Pierné attempted such a synthesis

tragic motives in "Izeyl."

ter begins before the first act closes

his sympathetic investiture of

We have often doubted the wisdom of Mr. Frohman in wasting such a man as Mr. Thompson in ineffectual parts; but it is just possible-small consolation to the Mrs. Fiske, we may only say that this verartist in question-that if the little charsatile, vibratile woman always selects parts acters are adequately interpreted the big for whih she seems to possess no temones will take care of themselves. Miss peramental or physical aptitudes. Then to Fay Davis, a comedienne of fragrant perdemonstrate the victory of art over mind sonality and delicate methods, proved a and matter she proceeds to play whatever charming surprise. She is natural without a she has set out to do. We all exclaimed, taint of the realism beloved of the ruder raising aloft incredulous hands, when Tess order of naturalistic actresses; and she was announced. Yet Mrs. Fiske gave us possesses individuality and charm. That Tess, not Hurdy's Tess, but her own she can sound the deeper notes of tragic stubborn reading. For that matter the pathos those who have seen her Iris in London know well. As Miss Marr she has a play was not Hardy's, either. The sparkling creature we called Minnie Maddernwholly appropriate character to portray, shades of "Fogg's Ferry!"-did not reveal and portrays its archness, wit, maidenly potentialities for Ibsen; yet her Nora was scorn and tenderness she does most in a more memorable achievement than her "Frou-Frou." Consult the list of plays she evitably. With such redoubtable women as Jeffrey Lewis-always diverting-Hilds has appeared in since the frisky days Spong, Georgie Dickson, Mrs. Sol Smith and of Gallie farce-comedy-you will find Mrs. Helen Lowell, and such excellent men as Fiske trying ever for the big note, the note Charles Harbury-who seems to have renot naturally in her compass, but somehow juvenated himself and his art-Richard or other sounding it before she relinquishes Bennett, Julian L'Estrange, Joseph Franc calland Wallace Erskine, this play is Her Mary is salient rather than seductive. bound to be a success, not to mention its She is often disenchanting. In her eyes

many own merits.

wise. It is a wholly delightful comedy,

its development slight, its execution falter-

ing at times, but the characterization is capital and the situations full of humor i

not exactly of a high ethical quality. Bright

lines abound and there is a nappy atmos-

phere that is quite refreshing after the roses

and raptures of D'Annunzio, the lilies and

anguors of Heyse. Mr. Faversham returns

quality in his case. His keyboard is re-

stricted to a few notes within the octave;

he sounds them with a clear sincerity. Mr.

Esmond has contrived his play for a clever

company. It is ably interpreted, even such a remarkable character actor as W. H.

Thompson playing a small part like Mun-

kittrick. And how he plays it! It is abso-

lutely brimming over with vitality.

To those desiring an acquaintance with the real Rome, not the Rome of Zolo or the Rome of Hall Caine, "The Conquest and profound insight, depicts Mary as of Rome, by Matilde Serso is earnestly recommended. It contains more genuine tragedy, comedy and humanity than a bushel of plays on the eternal theme. And this novel is a scorching commentary upon shallow French, English and American remancers and melodramatists who sence that weakens the credibility of the attempt with kodak and with notebook to trap the majesty and mystery of Rome and thus photograph and pencil their way phemy-alleged or real-does not rhyme to fame and fortune.

with box office. Mrs. Fiske's manager was wise in keeping to blasted political hopes and ideals as the springboard for Oh! these thick dramatizations of thin novels-when will they end? When will plays be written for the stage by men who know the stage? When will our playwrights go for inspiration to the English classics, to the golden age of seventeenth-century dramatists, and purge their vision, enfeebled by tinkering with novels never meant for the footlights? The public is less blind than many are member how tall she seemed toward the fain to believe. It only awaits the strong end of the Tess season. She will end in man to follow him when he appears. When? JAMES HUNERER.

> The Brooklyn Theatres. John Drew will play 'The Mummy and the Humming Bird" this week at the Mon-

Kyrle Bellew is engaged at the Amphior this week in "A Gentleman of France.

"Under the Red Robe" is to be the attraction at the Columbia.

"The Two Orphans" will be presented at Corse Payton's Theatre.

"For Fair Virginia" at the Gotham.

A Ragged Hero" at the Park.

"My Lady Nell" at Blaney's. "The New South" at the Bijou.

"Sky Farm" at the Grand Opera House.

Vaudeville at Hyde & Behman's

"The Chaperons" at the Folly "Parisian Widows" at the Star

Burlesque at the Gayety.

Vaudeville at the Orpheum.

Concerts to-night at Hyde & Behman's and the Columbia.

First Week of the Opera.

of lights, odors, verse, music, pictures and The regular season of opera in French. Italian and German will begin at the Metropolitan Opera House to-morrow night read, seldom-quoted essay on the technical | The opening opera will be Verdi's "Otello," elements of style calls Macaulay "an in- with Albert Alvarez in the title role. Mme comparable dauber." His reasons for this Earnes as Desdemona, Mme. Homer as severe aspersion upon the drum-and-trum- Emilia and Mr. Scotti as Iago. On Wednespet manner of Macaulay's prose need not deday evening Mme. Sembrich will make her tain us now. It is the phrase that will stick reentry as Rosina in Rossini's "Il Barbiere until the historian's New Zealander mourndi Siviglia." Messrs. Salignac, Campanari, Gilibert and Edouard de Reszke will also fully contemplates London's vanished be in the cast.

On Thanksgiving night an extra per formance will be given, the opera being Verdi's "/lia," with Mmes. Earnes and Homer, Messrs. de Marchi, Scotti and Journet in the principal parts. On Friday night "Lohengrin" will be sung, and Anthes, the new German tenor, will make his debut in the title rôle. Mmes. Gadski and Schu-mann-Heink and Messrs. Bispham and Eduard de Reszke will also sing. On Saturday afternoon Mme. Sembrich will sing Violetta in "La Traviata," with Messrs. de Marchi and Scotti also in the cast, and on Saturday evening, "Carmen" cast; and on Saturday evening "Carmen" will be offered, with Mme. Seygard, Miss Schit, Messrs. Alvarez and Journet in the

Notes of Music Events.

The last of Daniel Frohman's concerts at the etropolitan Opera House will take place to-night the solo singers will be Shannah Cumming orano, and Gwillym Miles, barytone. The People's Choral Union will supply a chorus of 1,000 voices The principal number will be Max Bruch's cantate Fair Ellen." This is a short number and the or-hestra, under Wilter Damrosch, will play severa times and the soloists and chorus will be heard in

concert in this city on Wednesday night at Carnegle Hall. The soloist will be Mark Hambourg, planist, who will play the Tschalkowsky B flat minor con-

Frederic Lamond's second plano recital will take place at Mendelssohn Hall on Tuesday afternoon at 3 o'clock. He will play compositions by Brahms, Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, Schumann, Rubin stein and Liszt.

Carl Venth's song cycle, "Hiawatha," will b given on Friday afternoon at Mendelssohn Hall Lillian Prays, Isabel Bouton, John Young and Julian Walker will sing.

The Knelsel Quartet will give the first concer its eleventh season in this city at Mendelssohn Hall on Tuesday evening, with the aid of Ossi Gabrilowitsch, planist, The programme con sists of Sgambati's quartet in C sharp minor, opuknow Vienna to know what that means. 17; Arensky's D minor trio for plane and strings

and Beethoven's C minor quartet, opus 18. mphony concerts will take place at Carnegte Hall on Saturday afternoon. The orchestra will play the overture to "Furyanthe," the ballet music from "Orpheus" and Schubert's "March Militaire Oss p Gabrilowitsch, planist, will play the second and third movements of Chopin's E minor con-certo and numbers by Brahms, Raff and Rubin-

ORATORIO AND THE OPERA.

SOHN'S "ST. PAUL."

A Consideration of the Vitality of the Oratorio Form-No Masters of It Now Living-The Opening of the Regular Winter Season of Opera.

The revival of Mendelssohn's "St. Paul" was the most interesting musical occurrence of a week not barren of attractions. No thoughtful lover of oratorio could have failed to wonder that this music was not heard more frequently. The chief beauty of the oratorio form is its contrast between solo and chorus. Its value as a type lies in the opportunities it provides for the employment of great masses of voices. only oratorio and cantata furnish a concert field for the great chorus, which is a potent actor in musical art. Abundant testimony has been given as to the effect of many voices singing together even in unison. it. Augustine records that his first hearing of the Ambrosian chant moved him to tears, and who is there to-day who can hear unto unison harmonic and contrapuntal effects. and you have grand choral architecture.

outlived its usefulness. Their argument is might easily be made. of the words of Elijah or Paul and then sit down while a soprano arises and endeavors | the Philharmonic Society or the Kneise to utter some sentiments appropriate to the ecasion, after which a huge chorus bursts nto a pæan of something or other.

Nothing is easier than to ridicule an art form. All that one needs to do is to close his eyes to the symbolism, which is the foundation of all art. Demand a literal riew of the painted scenery in a theatre. and Shakespeare becomes infantile. Refuse to regard opera as a form of the poetic drama, and the singing becomes a species of mild insanity. Decline to accept the process of reduction employed in ordinary

pictures, and painting is foolish. But those who make this kind of argument against the oratorio as a form do not realize that the pursuit of their line of reasoning to its logical conclusion would furnish the most substantial support of the thing to which they object. If the lack of illusion in an art form is to be offered as a reason for its abolition, then the oratorio should survive both opera and drama, because t uses less symbolism than either and stands more nearly upon the plane of poetry. which appeals to the imagination alone.

The chief trouble with the oratorio today is not that it has outlived its early mission, but that it is destitute of master exponents. The music of the end of the nineteenth century was fin de siécle. It was of the flesh and the passions. It had not a jot or a tittle of the religious abstraction of the oratorio. Brahms, it is true, wrote a "German Requiem," and that work will live, at least in the records of the time. Dvorák wrote a requiem, too, but the shadows of "The Spectre's Bride" and "St. Ludamilla" were over it. The profound tones of religious conviction never ounded in it.

Edgar Tinel's "Franciscus" was another of the late nineteenth-century essays in oratorio, but what a carnal festival of naked tones! Here was a frenzied orgy of orchestral tints, a passionate dramatization of the fleshly sensations of a saint before sainthood had touched him. An oratorio surcharged with Gallo-Belgic erotism and made of music about as pious as that of the final scene of "Siegfried"! No. the salvation of the form was not to

be found in that. Gounod tried his hand at oratorio. Having kissed all the Margueriles who prom Weldon woman, he, like the sated Liszt, turned religious mystic in his old age, and There is an oratorio that would please even the patrons of the Metropolitan, with its theme of Faust's yearning for youth, labelled the Redeemer motive, and its march to Calvary, recalling in every measure the to Calvary, recalling in every measure the to the skies by people who are too lazy to distinguish between sharp and flat. And there does not seem to be any standard of there does not seem to be any standard of there does not seem to be any standard of

In England they make oratorios annually. just as they make other *Brummagem wares. They have the Handel and Mendelssohn lasts in the British Museum correctly labelled, and they have a royal training school for musical shoemakers. English composers are graduated in classes, and England expects every man of them to do his duty. Handel lived for years in England; he died there. Mendelssohn visited the country copiously. He composed a Scotch symphony. He wrote one of his masterpieces, "Elijah," for the Birmingham festival. In every British mu-Germans who made England musically famous. Every good English composer does his duty. He writes oratories or cantatas. The festivals teem with them. But Hans Sachs is dead, and with the lasts which he left, these 'prentice hands can

only cobble. Is it wonderful, then, that we have to go back again and again to the works of Handel and Mendelssohn? Is it astonishing that their admired conceptions strike us at each repetition as unapproachable? They certainly remain unapproached by any successors. To find their peers we must go to the pages of the prince of oratorio writers, the old cantor of Leipsic. But the "Matthew Passion" is beyond the flight of the public imagination. Its atmosphere is too rarefied for groundlings. On the other hand the plain virility of Handel and the elegant fluency of Mendelssohn are easily comprehended.

But let us not scoff at the polish of Mendelssohn. It is a common custom to sneer at him because he was so refined in his methods. People sometimes speak of him as Kipling spoke of Stevenson (whose shoes he was not worthy to unlace): "There is a writer named Robert Louis Stevenson who makes delicate mosaics in words and files out to a hair." But Mendelssohn has his moments of power and they are not all in "Elijah." Most of them are, to be sure, and in no other work did he ever rise to such heights of dramatic intensity as in the scene around the altar in his masterpiece. But "St. Paul" is not to be sniffed aside. One may recall Schumann's record of its first performance in Vienna. "Like a festal fire, its continuous chain of beauties communicated the composer's inspiration to the listeners. Such wealth, such masterly power, and above all such melodic charm were not expected. When I counted the public at the close, it was as numerous

as at the commencement-and one must

Vienna and three-hour-long oratorios have

lived until now in wretched misalliance;

but 'St. Paul' has made all right again.

What more can I say? Every number

took, three were encored, there was most

emphatic applause at the close. Old Gyro-

wetz declared that according to his judg-

ment this was the greatest work of modern

to experience such an event in my latter

If some composer will reveal a gift for such com- sition in these days, producing THE REVIVAL OF MENDELS- such so s Jerusalem, Thou That Stonest the Pr. hets," "Consume Them All," and "Oh, God, Have Mercy Upon Me," and such choruses as "Rise Up" or "Sleepers Awake, there will, be less talk about the oratorio form having outlived its usefulness. But when that composer comes, if he is to write power of religious self-effacement which Handel and Mendelssohn had. If he is to write on a Christian subject there must scream through his music that illuminating light of Christianity which Louis Ehlert finds in "St. Paul." If he is to compose with that splendid majesty of Hebraic ourage, whitch vitalizes the pages of the

> Quartet hasten to the opera on every pos anything short of battle, murder or sudden

To society women, as they are called, the opera offers none of these temptations in any exaggerated form. To them to go to the opera is simply to float with the current, which is all that they do during with the many unmusical operagoers

There was a time when the opera was conducted here in a serious style, and although it was carried on in the house owned by these social dignitaries, they promulgated a decree that it was not fashionable. The result was that it was never supported with ardor by the general public. To be sure it was feet was power and was good orchestra, and good ballet. The interest of the public could have been cen-tred upon the operas themselves, and upon the general excellence of their per-

enaded through "Faust at the Grand Opera and having soiled his fingers with the work of the state of the stat turned religious mystic in his old age, and wrote a sweetly pretty "Redemption."

There is an oratorio that would please first offered to us her once subtle and devil-

there does not seem to be any standard of art among these worshippers of opera-singers. They used to go into raptures over Jean de Reszke, whose methods were so exclusively refined that these people could not possibly have understood them completely; and they will ladle you out just as full a measure of ecstasy over some other tenor who can only bawl at the top of his lungs whenever the composer in mercy

writes a high note.

These things are not to the benefit of operatic art. Be it said, however, that the manager strives manfully to provide the manager strives manifully to provide the opera-going public with singers of the highest rank. The company assembled for this season is perhaps not as strong in tenors as could be wished, but that is surely not Mr. Grau's fault. He has done his sician's household is reared an altar to the memory of Handel and Mendelssohn, two best. Carusi, the Italian whose clear, high voice excited Covent Garden last sum is engaged, but cannot come here till next season. Knote, the most promising of young German tenors, could not come could Miss Destinn, who has recently risen to notice. But she at least will come next year, together with the tenor Kraus, who is said to have made great strides in his art. As it stands the present company is espe-

cially strong in sopranos.

With Sembrich, Melba (who is to come later in the season), Nordica, Gadski, Adams genuine Dresden ware. Oh, rapture! W. J. HENDERSON.

Estey

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Organs

upon religious subj c s, he must have the on a Jewish story, he must charge his music

No doubt the opening of the opera season, which is to take place to-morrow night, will impress itself upon a large part this community as the musical event of the period. The truth is that as a musical thing the opera, as conducted at the Metropolitan Opera House, is greatly overrated That there are very many persons who moved the singing of many children? Add have a genuine interest in the perform ances cannot be denied. Indeed there is every reason to be grateful that it is so. There are not a few writers, however, To these persons, the opera is a genuine who contend that the oratorio form has delight, but not nearly so great a one as i

that its dramatic pretensions are absurd. The truth, however, is that people who How foolish it is, they say, for a man in do not care at all for music as music and vening dress to stand up and intone some | who could not by any argument or persuasion be induced to attend the concerts of sible occasion and would not miss it for

death.

Not all these people go merely because opera is fashionable entertainment and offers the comparatively inexpensive privilege of sitting in the same house as the "queens of society" and perhaps being mistaken for them. Not all of them go merely because the opera house portal of them go because the opera provides a field for the exhibition of jewels and rich garments and a considerable portion of the

most of their irresponsible lives. But they, even those of them who pretend to love music, nay, who honestly think that they do love it, assume an attitude toward opera which is fundamentally hostile

To be sure, it was German opera and was pretty badly sung. But it did not have to be. A fairly good article of opera in French or Italian or both could have been given, with good scenery, good stage management.

rmance. Fashion, however, decided against this. People who knew nothing about music and who cared nothing about it were in a position to dictate to the remainder of the public. The result was that a decision was reached to give opera with everything ordinary except the principals and to en-gage for the leading roles celebrated

we have had the celebrated singers now for some years. We have an operatic public so trained that it will not go to the opera unless there are three or four of the famous stars of the company in the cast, and which invariably stays away whenever the manager, out of his recognition of the necessity of sometimes letting his singers be heard in new parts produces a new Worse than this is the attitude her. which was worse than slovenly and cease

and Scheff, the impresario is prepared for anything. So let the curtain go up on the scene of storm and revelry before the palace of the Moor of Venice. Let us hear once more the splendid inspiration of the grand old man of Italian music. Let us listen to the sparkling humor of that masterly tone-juggler, Rossini. Let us hear the pealing of the Egyptian trumpets and the death wail of "O terra, addio." Let us see the Brahantian nobles gather and watch see the Brabantian nobles gather and watch the coming of the Schwannen-Ritter whose name must not be asked. All these thing have we seen and heard before. All these people we have not seen and heard before. There will be a new Lohengrin, warranted

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FINE THINGS TO CHOOSE FROM AT NEW YORK PLAYHOUSES.

Audrey" to Be the Novelty of the Week With Eleanor Robson as the Heroine Changes in Current Production

-New Faces in Some of the Companies. The theatres are entering auspiciously ipon what promises to be a season of unprecedented good fortune. Already several of the new plays have established a hold upon public favor that assures them of long acceptance here, and a few of the plays that were not new when the season began have returned to find a fresh welcome. The dramatization of Mary Johnston's story, "Audrey," will be the principal novelty to-morrow night, being presented for the first time at the Madison Square Theatre. Eleanor Robson will have the title rôle, and Selen : Johnson and James E. Wilson will be seen in the company with

James K. Hackett has demonstrated that Winston Churchill's novel, "The Crisis," has in it the qualities which make a good play. The stirring incidents of this wartime drama have been followed with intense interest by the audiences at Wallack's. Mr. Hackett's Stephen Brice is

finely conceived and admirably acted. "Imprudence" has brought a lot of old favorites and one new one. Miss Fay Davis. to the Empire, along with Mr. Faversham, the star in this Esmond comedy. The fun in it is rich and plentiful. Hilda Spong does a fine bit of acting in the part of a golden-haired adventuress.

"The Eternal City" will continue to be produced at the Victoria. Miss Viola Allen as Roma has received a warm greeting from her many friends. The house is crowded

every night. No more wholesome comedy has been een in New York for many a day than Clyde Fitch's "The Stubbornness of Geraldine," in which Mary Mannering is achieving a remarkable triumph at the Garrick. The play moves merrily from the first act on shipboard to the final scene, which justifies Geraldine's conduct.

Ethel Barrymore at the Savoy is coming bravely to the end of her second month in "Carrots" and "A Country Mouse," and there is no abatement of the interest which ese entertainments have aroused. Her parture will not take place until after

Mrs. Patrick Campbell will spend the week at the Harlem Opera House, and it will be her last engagement in New York for a considerable time. She is going to Australia at the close of her American tour. She will act in "The Joy of Living," "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "Magda" and "Aunt Jeannie" during the week.

This will be the last week of Mrs. Le Moyne's visit at the Garden Theatre in Among Those Present," in which she portrays with more or less faithfulness a New York society woman. Miss Olga Flinck and George Gaston share the honors f the performance with the star. Willard is coming to the Garden on Tues

Pinero's "Iris" still affords Virginia Harned at the Criterion an opportunity to be one of the most-talked-of women in the town. There are only two weeks more of her engagement before "Iris" will give way to Julia Marlowe and "The Cavalier."

Mrs. Leslie Carter has brought amazing prosperity to the Belasco during the first weeks of this new playhouse. She will take "Du Barry" away at the end of the present week and will be followed on Dec. 3 by Blanche Bates in Mr. Belasco's new Japanese drama. "The Darling of the Code."

Martin Harvey holds the boards at the Herald Square for one week more with "A Cigarette Maker's Romance and "Rouget de Lisle." Richard Mansfield will bring "Julius (æsar" to this theatre on Dec. 1.

Sherlock Holmes is about to vanish from he life of this city, in which for some time he has played an interesting part. Mr. fillette's engagement at the Knickerbocker, which will close next Saturday night, has been the occasion of great delight to a host of persons. Mr. Gillette will be followed at the Knickerbocker by N. C. Goodwin and Maxine Elliott in the "Altar of Friendship."

The Circle Theatre, at Broadway and

Sixtieth street, made over since it was last in use, will be opened on Wednesday night as the home of the Herbert stock company, an organization of which Miss Bljou Fernandez is the leading member. Bronson Howard's "Aristocracy" will be the first offering, and there will be a change of bill weekly.

Lovers of gorgeous spectacle will find their fancy pleased at the Manhattan Thea-tre, where Mrs. Fiske has put on her "Mary of Magdala." The historical setting has been prepared with unwearring care and Mrs. Fiske has given her best thought and talent to the production. "Fad and Folly" is the new name under

which the entertainment at aris. Osborns Playhouse will be known on and after Tuesday. Till then it will be "Tommy Rot." The changes which will be introduced with the rechristening will make of it a very different show. Blanche Ring and Harry Conor will continue to hold the centre of the stage. "Are You a Mason?" a farce that is full

which the entertainment at Mrs. Osborn's

of fun and ginger, moves up to the new West End Theatre this week, being played There are no dull moments these days at Weber & Fields's music hall, with "Twirly-

Whirly and "Humming Birds and Onions" as the bill. The company is happily distributed, and the new burlesque is improving every day, as Weberfields shows al-"Sally in Our Alley," which gave way to "The Silver Slipper" recently, returns to town to-morrow night for a three-weeks stay at the New York. Its music and its brightness have been appreciated wherever

Anna Held and her companion beauties have another week to remain at the Grand Opera House in "The Little Duchess The play has been revised and improved since last winter, and Saharet has been introduced in a captivating dance.

interrupted bliss at the Casino, where t promises to rival, if not exceed, the long run which it has had in London. Thomas Q. Seabrooke, Adele Ritchie and Katie Barry are seen in it to rare advantage. Mabelle Gilman and "The Mocking Bird" remain at the Bijou. The songs that seem

"A Chinese Honeymoon" goes on in un-

of comic operas are "Sly Musette," "The Lion and the Mouse" and "What's the Matter With the Moon To-night?" Miss Johnstone Bennett will join the "Silver Slipper" company at the Broadway o-morrow night, taking Josie Sadler's place as *Belle Jimper*, the slavey. Sam Bernard now has a song in this musical comedy. It is topical and is called "I'd Be Satisfied With Life."

ikely to be remembered from this newest

There seems to be no limit to the popu arity of "The Night of the Party," in which Weedon Grossmith and his English company are appearing at the Princess Theatre. If other lookings did not forbid it they might easily stay there all winter

"A Country Girl" passes into its tenth week at Daly's to-morrow night. At the Wednesday night performance the house will be given over to an immense theatre party of Phi Delta Theta men, who will be here

The bill changes at the American Theatre o-morrow night to a dramatic story of New York life called "Kidnapped." It is by David K Higgins. A fine piece of panoramic painting, showing the Brooklyn Bridge and the river below, is promised.

"The Merry Wives of Windsor" is an nounced for this week at the Murray Hill. Henry V Donnelly will be the Falstaff, Laura Hope Crews the Mistress Ford, and Rose Stuart the Mistress Page.

There are usually no vacant places at the Fourteenth Street Theatre, where Chauncey Olcott is having the success of his life in "Old Limerick Town." His new ongs are encored again and again at every

"The Ninety and Nine" looks forward confidently to a long stay at the Academy of Music. Its most striking stage effect

One taste convinces Always ready to eat